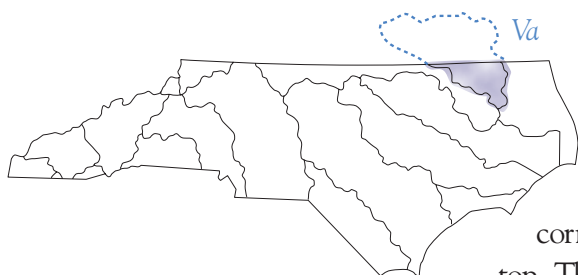


CHOWAN RIVER BASIN

The Chowan River Basin is a region of vast hardwood swamps and tea-colored rivers. It is a place where fish were once currency and rivers were once highways.



Since Colonial times, fishermen have netted legions of herring, shad and striped bass during the fishes' spring spawning runs into freshwater rivers. These tributaries also served as pathways of trade, through which timber, fish, tobacco, corn and animal hides left the thriving port of Edenton. The town's origins are traced as far back as 1655, making Edenton the first permanent settlement in North Carolina. Historians believe homesteaders traveled south from the Jamestown, Va., area to settle the mouth of the Chowan River.

Bobcat

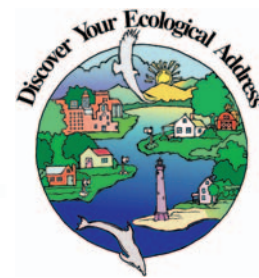


BILL LEA

BILL LEA

Before European settlement, the Chowan River was home to Algonkian Indians, who lived for centuries on the riverbanks—the Weapemeoc on the west shore, the Chowanoke on the east. They, too, fished the bountiful waters and farmed the fertile soils.

The waters of the basin are still known for some of the best fishing in the state. Largemouth bass, bluegill, chain pickerel, black crappie, sunfish, perch and herring are the most sought-after species. The Chowan River is often called the capital of the "river herring" fishery.



profile:

Total miles of streams and rivers: 803

Total acres of estuary: 16,970

Municipalities within basin: 19

Counties within basin: 5

Size: 1,378 square miles

Population: 61,034 (2000 U.S. Census)

Cypress trees on Chowan River (below and left)

CHARLES BRASWELL JR.

